

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 12, 14, 16, and 17 have been examined. Claims 13 and 15 remain withdrawn pursuant to an election of species requirement. Claims 12, 16, and 17 have been amended. Claims 23-30 have been added. Re-examination and reconsideration of the claims, as amended, are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 12, 14, 16, and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,770,088 issued to Jang. Such a rejection is traversed in part and overcome in part as follows.

As the Examiner certainly knows and appreciates, a single cited art reference must teach each and every element of the claim to establish anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102. M.P.E.P. § 2131. The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has held that, "the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claims." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

In the instant case, the Examiner relies on Figs. 9B-9D in Jang as describing a number of the claimed aspects of the present invention, including "a plurality of S-shaped connectors (26)." Applicants respectfully disagree with such reliance. A careful review of Figs. 9B-9D reveal that the Jang connector struts (26) simply do not comprise an S-shape. The shape consists principally of a proximal axial element (194), an intermediate lateral element (196), and a distal axial element (198). More importantly, both the connecting ends (194, 198) each extend axially from the adjacent wall section, in contrast to the claimed invention.

However, in order to expedite prosecution and more clearly distinguish the S-shaped connectors of the present invention from the teachings of Jang, Applicants have amended independent claim 12 so that it now recites in part that the *first and second ends of the S-shape connectors each emerge laterally with respect to a longitudinal axis of the cylindrical wall section*. This positive structural limitation that each end emerge laterally with respect to a longitudinal axis of the cylindrical wall more clearly defines the true S-shape of the present

invention. With such structural clarification, it is believed that the teachings of Jang which clearly show that at least one of the connecting ends (194, 198, 168, 56) in Figs. 7-9 emerges axially from the opposite cylindrical wall section, are clearly avoided.

Applicants request if the present rejection is maintained, the Examiner show or explain where the Jang reference teaches or suggests that both ends of the S-shape connectors each emerge laterally with respect to a longitudinal axis of the cylindrical wall section. Absent a showing in the cited art of record, Applicants request the withdrawal of this rejection and allowance of independent claim 12 (and the claims which depend therefrom). Applicants further request that withdrawn claims 13 and 15 be allowed as they depend from allowable independent claim 12.

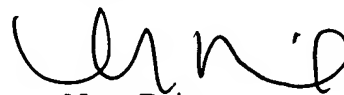
Independent claims 17, 23, 26, 27, and 30 recite similar structural limitations as that argued above with respect to claim 12. As such, these independent claims (and the claims which depend therefrom) should be allowable for several of the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 12.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



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